



Tapuitema

...ina ia manino le folauā.

Official American Samoa Government Weekly Newsletter



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Friday, May 2, 2008

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Governor Togiola Calls Fono Special Session

The Fono's special session which was called by Governor Togiola Tulafono convened on Monday, April 28, 2008, included discussions on, among other things, the military voting bill and the teacher reclassification legislation.

In addition, other items include the appropriation for the LBJ Medical Center, copyright legislation for the upcoming Pacific Festival of the Arts, and appointments to boards, councils, and commissions of the American Samoa Government.

The special session will last about ten days.

MILITARY VOTING

With regards to the military voting bill, local lawmakers must come to an agreement on the final language of the legislation. The Senate passed its own version of the bill. However, senators believe a separate legislation needs to be drafted for the House's version of the same bill which calls for the inclusion of absentee registration for ministers and their family members serving off island.

The Senate's version of the bill, which is the original version, changes local election statutes and allows American Samoans serving in the armed forces to use federal absentee registration to vote during the local elections.

TEACHER RECLASSIFICATION

The reclassification for teachers will be discussed to basically address the compensation of educators in the public school system, an issue that has been highly debated over the past few years. Governor Togiola promised local school teachers last year that legislation will be submitted to address the issue and now the matter will be reviewed by Fono members.

APPROPRIATION FOR THE LBJ HOSPITAL

The appropriation for the hospital legislation is to fund the \$9 million that LBJ Medical Center owes in Medicare debts to the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).

The LBJ has been making monthly payments of about \$211K using operating funds and monies earmarked for contingent liabilities. Based on those figures, without changes to revenue or services, LBJ will be forced to start cutting services later this year in September. LBJ CEO Patricia Tindall is reported as saying that revenue funding options were discussed with members of the ASG audit team and the Legislative Financial Officer. Subsequently, LBJ drafted a bill that would fund not only the Medicare debt for the five years of extended repayment plan, but also ASG's participation in the Medicaid Block Grant which would enable American Samoa to continue to apply for the allowable federal grant funds up to the cap amount. Draft of the legislation was submitted to the Governor's Office last month.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

The copyright legislation protects all rights of the 10th Festival of Pacific Arts scheduled to be hosted locally from July 20 – August 2, 2008. Copyright of the Festival is a concern of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) as in past festival events, six countries under the SPC have had copyright laws in place, and American Samoa is not one of them.

ASG APPOINTMENTS

The only appointment that has been made known so far is that of Manu'a District Governor PC Tufele Li'amatua as a member of the board of directors for the American Samoa Medical Authority.

Governor urges public to assist in protecting our borders

Governor Togiola Tulafono announced during his weekend radio program that the Office of Vital Statistics is working hard to prevent fraud when it comes to combating the misuse of personal records like birth and death certificates.

According to Togiola, it is our own people who manipulate the law when they bring in elderly people to serve as witnesses and swear that certain people were born in the territory when in fact, they were not.

(There have been cases where foreigners, specifically people from Samoa, have been able to obtain American Samoa birth certificates).

But the Office of Vital Statistics is now part of the local Department of Homeland Security and this means American Samoa must comply with federal regulations regarding the protection of birth certificates, and the careful monitoring of proper records – all of which play a critical role in protecting our borders.

The Governor said ASDHS is working on computerizing records for birth certificates and other legal documents like marriage licenses and death records. In addition, work is being carried out to change the paper currently being used for birth certificates.

Togiola said the change is necessary in order for such documents issued in the territory to be recognized by the federal government.

Because the government does not have the man power to monitor and fully enforce local regulations, the Governor is calling on members of the general public for their assistance in preventing fraud and identity theft by contacting the ASDHS or the Governor's Office if they know of a person who was born in Samoa but holds an American Samoa birth certificate.

HISTORICAL NOTES

By: Stan Sorensen, Historian, Office of the Governor

On April 18, 1970, the Apollo 13 spacecraft, containing astronauts James A. Lovell, Jr., John L. Swigert, Jr. and Fred W. Haise, Jr. splashed down in American Samoan waters.

On April 19, 1909, German Samoa's Governor, Dr. Wilhelm Heinrich Solf, deported Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe and 71 members of the "*Mau a Pule*" (the Savai'i *Mau* movement) to Saipan in the Mariana Islands, aboard SMS *Jaguar*.

On April 20, 1960, a convention met "with the use of the Samoan language throughout," to draft a constitution for American Samoa. "Each of the 68 members of the convention, representing the ranking leadership of every section of the territory and selected by village and district councils according to custom and tradition, spoke and debated on the issues facing the convention."

On April 21, 1941, Lieutenant General Thomas Holcomb, Commandant of the Marine Corps, authorized the organization of the First Samoan Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. The Battalion's strength was limited to 500 men.

On April 21, 1958, a special session of the Fifth Legislature of American Samoa was convened to consider proposed amendments to the Code of American Samoa submitted by Governor Peter Tali Coleman and incorporated as House bills, all of which were tabled in the Senate during the regular session. All bills were passed by both Houses.

On April 22, 1916, a new branch dispensary was opened at Leone, American Samoa, at a cost of \$2,300.

On April 22, 1931, Lieutenant Commander Arthur Tenney Emerson relieved Commander James Sutherland Spore and became American Samoa's 20th naval governor (acting: until July 17, 1931).

On April 22, 1947, Captain Vernon Huber relieved Captain Harold Alexander Houser and took office as American Samoa's 34th naval governor (until June 15, 1949).

On April 24, 1960, the American Samoa flag, designed by Sotoa Unifareti, an art teacher at Samoana High School, was officially approved by the Legislature of American Samoa.

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On April 26, 1955, Mosiula F. "Mosi" Tatupu, the third Samoan to be a member of a Super Bowl team, and the second Samoan to play in a Super Bowl (as a running back, No. 30, for the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XX on January 26, 1986), was born in Pago Pago, American Samoa to parents Mosiula F. Tatupu of Masefau and Letau Gao'upu of Pago Pago.

On April 27, 1960, the Constitution of American Samoa was ratified and approved by 68 delegates to the Constitutional Convention. "In a historic open-air ceremony, 5,000 persons witnessed the signing of the constitution by each of the 68 members of the convention, followed by the Governor [Peter Tali Coleman] and Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton."

ASG RADIO PROGRAM

With: Gov. Togiola Tulafono

*On: Showers of Blessings FM 104.7
Saturdays @ 7a.m.- 9:00a.m. Call: 699-8123/8124*

USEPA recognizes local piggery compliance program

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency's local piggery compliance program was recognized during the USEPA's Pacific Southwest regional awards ceremony held in San Francisco, California earlier this month.

This is the first time ASEPA has been presented with such an award since it was established as a government agency many years ago. In addition, ASEPA was the only Pacific Islands EPA agency to receive an award this year.

ASEPA's Lt. Elena Vaouli and legal counsel Nathan Mease attended the awards ceremony to accept the plaque in place of ASEPA executive director Fanuatele Dr. Toafa Vaiaga'e who was unable to make the trip due to prior commitments.

Fanuatele said the award serves not only as recognition of the territory and its efforts, but also as credit for Governor Togiola Tulafono for supporting the implementation of the program in the territory. He also extended credit to the ASEPA clean water staff and the Department of Health for their continuous support.

A few years back, Togiola called on the piggery owners and local residents to collaborate and work together on ways to overcome health problems created by pig waste, by heeding the warnings and advisories issued by local officials on the subject.

ASEPA was one of over 20 organizations and individuals throughout the region that was recognized for their efforts to protect and preserve the environment in 2007. This is quite an honor, considering that this year the USEPA received 130 nominations.

In a statement, USEPA regional administrator Wayne Nastri said that the USEPA is pleased and honored to acknowledge the innovative and far-reaching environmental work achieved by this impressive group of organizations and individuals.

He wrote, "They set an example for all of us to follow. All of this year's winners – in fact, all of this year's nominees – have made commendable efforts to protect and preserve our air, water, and land, or increased our awareness of the environmental challenges we face."

According to the USEPA, a significant percentage of families in American Samoa raise pigs for, among other things, use during family and village celebrations where pigs are roasted and served as the central part of the feast.

As the local population increases, so has the number of pigs, resulting in growing concerns about pig waste contributing to not only disease but also pollution. One of the diseases addressed is Leptospirosis, which is associated with the urine of pigs and other animals that can infect humans through contact with contaminated water.

Leptospirosis is a local concern as the common location for a pig pen is above or adjacent a stream where washed up pig waste ends up.

To help combat the problem, the ASEPA created the Piggery Compliance Team. Since its formation, the compliance team has been able to identify over 1,000 families that own and operate piggeries.

Team members not only conducted outreach, but they also educated the families on how to comply with regulations, before carrying out follow-up inspections and, when necessary, taking action to ensure that everything was in compliance.

By the end of last year, the compliance team had shut down a total of 69 non-compliant piggeries and helped 57 other piggery owners get everything squared away so they can be in compliance.

Fanuatele expressed gratitude to the USEPA Region IX office for their support of a program which he says will serve as a model for other states and territories that deal with piggeries.

Region IX covers Nevada, California, Hawaii, Arizona, the US Pacific territories and tribal lands.

10TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS COMING SOON...
PLEASE KEEP AMERICAN SAMOA CLEAN!
FA'AMAMA AMERIKA SAMOA!

SHARE IMPORTANT INFORMATION & ACTIVITIES IN YOUR ASG NEWSLETTER

with your ASG workforce as well as the citizens of American Samoa.

Email your articles, announcements, pictures or other information to:

Harry Stevens (harry.stevens@americansamoa.gov) or Tialuga Vince Iuli (vince.iuli@americansamoa.gov)

Public input sought for Special Ed policies and procedures

A public hearing has been set for Wednesday, May 7, 2008 at the Special Education Building in Fagaalu from 4:30pm-6:30pm, where local residents are invited to provide input regarding Special Education policies and procedures.

The American Samoa Department of Education has for review, its policies and procedures under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) with the US Department of Education.

Copies of the document are available at the ASDOE central office in Utulei, the Special Education Office in Fagaalu, the Department of Health's Part C Helping Hands Office in Tafuna (Fagaima Road), the Vocational Rehabilitation Office in Tafuna, and the Center for Families of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (CFIDD) in Tafuna.

The document contains the required information for American Samoa's eligibility for IDEA '04 Part funds. At the conclusion of the public input period, comments will be reviewed and a final and approved document will be made available on the DOE website by June 30, 2008.

Upon review of the document, members of the public and/or interested individuals are welcomed to submit comments or suggestions in writing. The sixty-day review period, which commenced on April 9, 2008, will conclude May 8, 2008 – the day after the scheduled public hearing.

Electronic responses can be emailed to lainuu@gmail.com, and questions regarding the policies and procedures can be referred to 633-1323 from 8am-4pm Monday through Friday, or faxed to 633-7707.

New fees imposed at the Leone Dispensary and Dental Clinic

Locals who used to take advantage of the free dental services provided by the Department of Health through its Leone Dispensary will now have to pay up, due to frequent overcrowding of a clinic that only employs one dentist.

DOH medical director Dr. Ivan Tuliau said that the overcrowding of the Leone Dispensary is due to people by-passing the dental clinic at the LBJ Medical Center (where payment is required), for the free services offered at the Leone Dispensary.

The new imposed fees for the Leone Dispensary are \$10 for dental visits and \$10 for a scheduled appointment. Non-residents are charged a separate \$10 fee for a dental visit and a \$12 extraction fee, also called a treatment fee.

This means a non-resident receiving a simple tooth extraction will be charged a total of \$22 (\$10 for the visit and \$12 to get their tooth pulled out).

The new fees implemented in Leone are the same as the ones being charged at the Tafuna Dispensary, as well as the LBJ Medical Center.

Fees listed as "separate" for non-residents will vary, depending on the type of work performed at the dental clinic. Residents will also be charged separate fees for specialized dental work, of course, depending on what it is. Surgical procedures are charged a separate fee.

Dental work is limited in Leone however, due to limitations in the type of equipment on hand.

While the dental clinics at the Leone and Tafuna Dispensaries are up and running, the one at the Amouli Dispensary is not. But according to Tuliau, once the Amouli clinic is back in operation, the same fees will be implemented and become effective.

Locals visiting the Leone Dental Clinic are advised to be patient as there is currently only one chair to serve everyone.

Governor appoints Tufele Li'amatua to hospital board of directors

Governor Togiola Tulafono has announced his appointment of Manu'a District Governor PC Tufele Li'amatua as a member of the LBJ Medical Center's board of directors.

According to the Governor, Tufele will fill the required position of an "at large member" on the board, and he is hopeful that the Fono will "support the speedy confirmation of PC Tufele."

Tufele's appointment is one of the issues scheduled to be discussed during the Fono's Special Session which has been called by Togiola and set to open on Monday, April 28, 2008.

In his letter to the Fono leadership, Togiola said that Tufele has several years of experience in territorial government, most notably as a former Lieutenant Governor.

"He also has vast experience in leading government projects, most recently in his capacity as chairman of the American Samoa Future Political Status Study Commission (FPSSC)," Togiola wrote.

The Manu'a District Governor holds the title of Paramount Chief from Fitiuta, Manu'a. He also served as police commissioner in years past, and his wife Tofiga is one of the longest serving nurses on the LBJ staff.

OTHER LBJ BOARD MEMBERS:

The American Samoa Medical Authority board members include chairman Moananu Va, former chairman Charles Warren, and Department of Commerce deputy director Lelei Peau. The presence of each member fills a certain criteria in accordance with the law.

Va fills the "extensive business management experience" requirement, while Warren meets the "extensive financial experience" criteria.

Peau fills the "extensive health care/public administration experience" position.

Dr. Fred Uhrle, whose presence met the requirement of "active or retired medical doctor," is believed to be stepping down from his position. Togiola said he is currently considering the final appointment to fill the vacancy that will be created by Dr. Uhrle's absence from the board.

ASPA to implement new net metering policy next month

The board of the American Samoa Power Authority has adopted the final version of its Interconnection and Net Energy Metering Policy which will be implemented and become effective beginning May 5, 2008.

The policy was initially set to be implemented on April 2 and is limited to residential and small commercial customers.

Those who wish to install a renewable generating facility, solar or wind, that is 30 kilowatts or smaller and intended to offset all or a portion of their power needs are able to "net meter" with ASPA.

This means that a different meter, either a net meter or two separate meters, would be installed to track the flow of power in both directions. Customers who generate more power than they use in a month will receive kilowatt-hour credits that can be applied to their bills the following months.

However, customers that generate less power than they use will be required to pay the difference to ASPA.

ASPA's Chief Financial Officer Francis Leasiolagi points out that ASPA has included a "hefty subsidy" to residential and commercial customers, as they receive extra value with ASPA's decision to net meter the full retail rate, meaning customers receive credit for the 'bundled' cost of all ASPA power costs, including fuel, generation, transmission, distribution, customer service, and administration. The retail rate currently includes the inter-division subsidy to other divisions (water, wastewater, and solid waste).

ASPA Chief Operations Officer Reno Vivao said that after considering the public comments received, the decision was made to limit the policy to its intended end users, which are the residential and small commercial customers.

A separate policy will be pursued for larger commercial and industrial customers, with the intention to create conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

ASPA Chief Engineer Joachim Fong explained that large systems like the ones that were requested during the public hearings require more discussion and analysis due to the effects they will have on the grid.

"The responsible approach is to proceed with this policy as it was originally intended and commence work on another policy which addresses the requests made at the public hearing," he said.

ASPA CEO and general counsel Michael Keyser said that ASPA will be the leader in promoting and implementing renewable energy and to do this, we must reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. He said that in order to really make these systems cost effective, legislation is needed to create tax or other incentives similar to the existing federal incentives. Keyser said ASPA may speak with the Governor's Office concerning local legislation that would mirror the existing federal tax credits.

He concluded, "We felt it was important to lay the foundation by adopting this policy and then we will take the lead on finding financial resources to make it more cost effective."

Copies of ASPA's final version of the policy have been filed with the appropriate agencies in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act.

New OMV title, registration system combats fraud; complies with federal regs

The second component of the Modernization Program for the Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV) - the Vehicle Title and Registration System - is now up and running. (The first part of the program was introduced last year with the launching of the Digital Drivers Licensing System that complies with federal regulations and the Real ID Act).

Fred Scanlan, project manager for the Department of Public Safety's OMV systems, said that the basis of creating the new system is to be in compliance with a mandate set out by Congress in 2005 and later ruled upon in January 2008.

He said the two new programs implemented by OMV are merging standards under the Real ID Act, which places the territory at a level of 85% compliance. The Real ID Grant was a collective effort of the American Samoa Homeland Security Advisory Council for the OMV project enhancement.

Scanlan, who is part of the team that writes grant proposals for OMV systems, said that a grant proposal was submitted two weeks ago and, if approved, will implement new changes and place American Samoa at 100% compliance with the recent ruling by Congress, known as Section 37.

"First and foremost, the American Samoa Government has to agree to be in compliance," Scanlan said. He added that this is something that has to be discussed with the Governor and the local Legislature.

The deadline to be in compliance is May 2008 but American Samoa has been granted an extension until December 2009.

Meanwhile, the new Vehicle Title and Registration System is now servicing the territory. The new system meets current territorial regulations and guidelines established by the non-governmental organization of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators.

OMV general manager Marie Ripley said that the new system will make counterfeiting and fraudulent activities more difficult.

"The new program allows for computerized data to be collected and stored in the system," Scanlan explained, adding that this is the first time a system like this has been available in the territory.

The new system will connect to the national level, meaning Vehicle Identification Numbers (VIN) and updated information like where the vehicle came from and who it belongs to, will be accessible with the push of a button.

"Basically, we will have available to us the entire history of the vehicle," Scanlan said. He said there have been some issues involving people duplicating forms in the registration process, as prior to the arrival of the new system, forms were generally typed out on pieces of paper that could easily be copied and forged.

"The new system will definitely eliminate possible fraud," Scanlan said.

The new system integrates demographic information, driver licensing, and vehicle registration into one reliable and secure system. It also provides law enforcement and the courts with instant access to accurate information for the first time.

OMV's new vehicle titling and registration system, as well as the digital driver licensing system, were provided by WEI, Inc., based in Old Saybrook, Conn.

DOH carefully monitoring cases of mumps

The Department of Health has issued a statement saying that American Samoa is experiencing an increased number of children visiting the LBJ Medical Center experiencing signs and symptoms of mumps.

Of the 22 suspected cases of the infectious disease, DOH medical director Dr. Ivan Tuliau reports that six cases have already been confirmed.

Mumps is an acute infectious disease that is caused by a paramyxovirus and mainly affects children between the ages of 2-12.

Tuliau said that DOH and its immunization program are working diligently to keep the public updated regarding the mumps alert.

Meanwhile, parents are encouraged to ensure that their children are immunized to avoid any unnecessary illnesses. The good news is, there hasn't been a single confirmed case of measles in the territory so far.

All questions, comments, and concerns can be forwarded directly to Dr. Ivan Tuliau at 63304606 ext. 25

Upcoming ASCC Stage Production “the Most Contemporary to Date”

By James Kneubuhl, ASCC Press Officer

American Samoa Community College (ASCC) drama and dance instructor Carmela Gallace, along with her student cast and the technical crew organized by visual arts instructor Regina Meredith, have spent the last few days frantically attending to the multitude of last-minute details required to mount their three-day run of musical play “Aida”, which will open this Thursday evening at 7 p.m. in the Lee Auditorium, and continues through Saturday. All of them hope their hard work will pay off when the public has the opportunity to enjoy what Gallace describes as “the most contemporary piece we have done to date”. An epic love story set in ancient Egypt, “Aida” will showcase the most advanced levels of stagecraft (singing, dancing, and acting) and stage design ever attempted in an ASCC production. “It gives me great pride to say I can comfortably compare the level of choreography and acrobatic movement we’ve achieved with this play to popular mainland theater attractions like the Cirque de Soliel,” says Gallace. “The audiences will see things they have never before experienced.”

Paradoxically, while in a technical sense “Aida” represents the most contemporary production ever attempted by ASCC, in terms of subject matter the students have never presented a tale more ancient. “Aida” takes place around the year 3000 B.C., during the height of ancient Egyptian civilization. A Nubian princess captured by an Egyptian raiding party (who do not know her true identity) the character of Aida finds herself made a slave to Amneris, daughter of the Pharaoh. Aida develops a deep friendship with the princess Amneris, as well as her fiancée Radames, son of the Pharaoh’s chief minister. Soon, a love triangle develops between these three characters, complicated further by a plot by Ramades’ father to assassinate the Pharaoh. When the Egyptians later capture Aida’s own father, the Nubian King Amonasro, Aida must choose between her love for Ramades and the welfare of her people, which she can only ensure by arranging the escape of herself and the King.

The above story moves along through an acclaimed musical score composed by world-famous singer/songwriter Elton John and Broadway legend Tim Rice, the same team responsible for the well-loved tunes from Disney’s “The Lion King”. “The composers really bring the ancient story of ‘Aida’ to life for today’s audiences by making the music absolutely modern,” says Gallace. “You can hear beautiful Broadway-style ballads, but also reggae, Motown, rock & roll, gospel, and pop. This score sounds like nothing we’ve tried before, and I owe a lot to my colleague Kuki Tuiasosopo for helping the cast master the vocal parts. Regina Meredith, whom most of us know from her work in the visual arts, also has two years of opera training under her belt, and she also guided the cast through vocal techniques and exercises to help get their voices in shape to meet this kind of challenge.”

Meredith and her visual arts students have once again risen to the occasion by producing a set design which Gallace describes as “amazing”. After extensive research on ancient Egypt, Meredith and her students incorporated genuine hieroglyphic designs into their stage backdrops whenever possible, creating a visual fusion between the ancient and the contemporary. Meanwhile, preparing the action in the foreground of the production, Gallace has spent most of this semester putting not just one, but three separate casts through the demanding paces “Aida” requires.

“One actress, Ruth Ann Tuasivi, appears in more than one cast,” she says, “but otherwise each of the three evening performances will have an entirely separate group of students in the main roles.” “Aida” will feature many of the “veteran” student actors from previous ASCC productions. “This time around, I had more students who possessed a higher level of talent than ever before,” explained Gallace. “Their experience made moving to the ‘next level’ with a more difficult production like ‘Aida’ a natural progression. But still, between the veterans and the newcomers, I still had enough student performers for three almost entirely different casts.” Thus, the Nile Company will open on Thursday, followed by the Nubian Company on Friday, and the Egyptian Company, who will close the run Saturday night.

The public can purchase tickets for “Aida” at the door on all three evenings. The box office, organized by the ASCC Business Department, will open at 6 p.m., an hour before curtain time. General Admission is \$5.00, and \$10.00 for V.I.P. seating.

Governor to review final budget for Pacific Arts Festival

Governor Togiola Tulafono will be reviewing the final budget submitted to him by the organizing committee of the upcoming 10th Festival of Pacific Arts. The committee is hoping that the American Samoa Government can supplement an additional \$1 million to cover the noted shortfall for a budget that is a little over \$4 million. Despite concerns voiced from some countries about media reports regarding the budget shortfall for the Festival, the show will go on as scheduled.

The top two biggest expenses for the Festival are the food voucher program and the renovation projects for the different local venues. The food voucher program is to feed an estimated 2,000 delegates traveling to the territory to represent different island nations from around the Pacific.

An added expense includes a consultant (Stockwell Limited), hired to handle the live satellite feed of the two-week event. An estimated 8 million viewers from across the Pacific region are expected to tune in for the two-hour live broadcast of the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as an hour or two of highlights everyday. It is unknown how much the committee will have to pay for this service.

Meanwhile, contributions have been pouring in for the Festival, with the most recent one being from COS Samoa Packing which donated \$20,000 last week. Other generous contributors include Florence Saulo and Associates, the local Arts Council, ASCO Motors, ANZ Amerika Samoa Bank, and Bank of Hawaii.

In related news, steps are being taken to ensure that proper quarantine methods will be in place during the Festival. Recently, two officials from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community were in the territory to conduct a refresher training course for the quarantine officers from the local Department of Agriculture.

The course included training on effective inspection of incoming produce and other products that will be brought in during the Festival. In addition, the quarantine officers were familiarized with international inspection standards.

SPC is distributing information packets about American Samoa's quarantine procedures to all participating countries.

ASPA-ASEPA Host Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Training

The first time in history, American Samoa Power Authority and American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency completed a 3-day cross connection control and backflow prevention training conducted by Michael Patten of the Washington Environmental Training and Research Center (WETRC) at the Green River Community College in Auburn, Washington. The training addressed the critical compliance area of backflow prevention and cross-connection program requirements. A total of approximately 30 participants from Department of Public Works, Department of Public Health, as well as ASEPA and ASPA staff attended. Participants included the staff responsible to deal with water, public health, new installation, building permits and compliance issues. The 3-day course will enable the respective staff from the various agencies to develop or improve their knowledge of cross connection, control program development, administration and management. Course topics include public health aspects, risk and liability management, control procedures and assemblies, inspection priorities and procedures and program management issues.

ASPA Water and Special Projects Division, with the guidance and coordination of Commander Brad Rea, P.E. who is also Special Assistant to the ASEPA Director, worked to identify a 'customized for ASPA' training, to focus on the territory's unique water situation and critical needs. The training was partially funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency with a local match from ASPA. ASPA invited the Department of Public Health and Department of Public Works, because they are also involved in the process of compliance, health and building permits. Upon completion of this training, ASPA intends to provide more public information to our local customers and work with our agency partners to assure program compliance dealing with cross connection and backflow prevention.

ASPA CEO and management continue to seek ways to attract expertise in the critical areas of utility service to develop and strengthen the skills, knowledge and abilities of ASPA staff.